

Central CA Project Call with Phil Shapiro from TripTAC

Friday Sept 23, 2011

Attendees

- Trini Juarez, USFS
- Tamara Wilton, USFS
- Jaime Eidswick, TRIPTAC
- Phil Shapiro, TRIPTAC
- Timory Peel, USFS

Tamara ran through the agenda/accomplishments of Wednesday's kick-off meeting with the folks from the NPS associations, BLM and universities. Don Brubaker, FWS, couldn't make Wednesday's meeting but will be participating.

Phil suggested additional NPS representatives beyond the RTCA folks.

(RTCA is the Rivers, Trail and Conservation Assistance Program. It is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA staff provides technical assistance to communities to conserve rivers, preserve open space and develop trails and greenways.)

Trini shared a graphic he feels demonstrates the overarching view/goal of this project - trying to answer the question: what is the build-out of this project? The message was:

Car-less California: Addressing the Health and Outdoor Leisure Needs of California's Underserved Populations through Seamless and Sustainable Public Transit Systems

Phil suggested broadening the scope beyond the underserved. His concerns with these projects are financial sustainability and utilization. The broader the population you're trying to serve, the more likely you'll get the number of users you need to make it worthwhile. An additional audience to consider would be foreign tourists who may not want to rent a car but would like to visit public lands.

The group feels though that meeting the needs of underserved populations will also meet transportation needs of those who chose not to have/use a car. They want others to know that this project is trying to accomplish this social justice issue as their primary focus with secondary benefits. California is in a position to take the initiative.

Although we are trying to target folks we don't typically see as visitors to public lands, by virtue of doing that we should reach everyone. Some activities/planned facilities/etc may be geared toward specific populations but it will be part of how project will flush out.

Group is working through a process that identifies underserved populations with a broad definition as well as a narrow definition. May use economics or education level to define, which

will reach a broader group. Improving transit for those that can't reach public lands should provide a benefit even for those that currently can.

One message from Nina and Emilyn was that the information on how to reach and serve these populations is out there. Federal agencies just haven't taken advantage/used that information yet. This project is an opportunity to pull all that in and use in a coordinated effort.

Phil mentioned there was a Car-FREE campaign in Boston and other big cities in the late 1970s. He prefers that branding to Car-LESS somewhat although the group had liked the connotations that the project is trying to address those populations who don't drive by necessity versus not driving by choice. And the LESS is nice acronym: Leisure for Everyone as Seamless and Sustainable with a CAR potential acronym of California's Active Recreation. Timory mentioned we need to carefully design it so it doesn't look like "careless" at first glance.

Highlights of Wednesday's discussion included:

There was some struggle with the urban/near urban differences. Group is thinking of San Fran and associated communities as primary hubs with the valley communities as secondary hubs. San Fran isn't near NFS lands but has regional parks and FWS/NPS lands. We need to build upon what we have and branch out from there. How can we whet the appetite of those close to urban areas to visit these proximate locations and tier out from there? Goals is to encourage them to participate in additional recreation and leisure activities on public lands

Barriers – They are not always transportation, although that is one of the key barriers. Also includes the idea of wilderness being scary, worry for personal safety, question what do we do there. Can link to Sierra GeoTourism project, where we've identified itinerary and exploration tracks and hundreds of activities and destinations foods, restaurants about the heart of the sierra. These are attractions we could weave into eventual destinations.

Boundaries – felt discussion was important because of overlap with southern California transportation/ATS planning if successful with this year's grant application.

Phil pointed to page 6 of Wednesday's notes (third bullet of point #4) and strongly suggested the boundaries are determined based on a transportation shed rather than a geomorphic/vegetation boundary. Don't focus on the highway systems (it's contrary to the Car-LESS theme). Focus the project on central California, existing transit and where you can build from there. He really liked the hub/spokes of a wheel concept. Important to do an inventory of existing ATS and let that help you define your boundaries (TASKED TO JAMIE before next

Other observations from Phil –

Keep this focused and don't bite off more than you can chew. His key management principle is to under-promise and over-deliver. Focusing on existing ATS, hub concept and achievable planning will buy more than grand plans that go unfulfilled.

Notes are from the first brain dump and are all over the place, now need to focus on what we're trying to accomplish. Instead of the 10,000-foot vision, we should think of this project as a building block for the subsequent planning projects in southern and northern California. Need to determine the goals, objectives and performance measures. This should follow from the vision but needs to be done early because it will define the data we need. Emilyn said she would develop the vision statement but very busy and will be challenging for her to have ready in time for December meeting. Tamara will ask about others taking on the task so can be done early and preliminary goals/objectives developed before the meeting too. Phil and Jamie can help develop these goals and objectives. This will define what success will look like and where we want to be at project completion.

(Some language choice differences between Trini and Phil included outcomes vs. goals/objectives and principles vs. goals/objectives. Determined both accomplish the same thing in this case.)

Phil does see this as a model for other states. He believes all ATS planning should be thinking regionally, which is why he would like to see the project broader than just underserved populations.

Lay out methodology using a flow chart or some other visual reference. How will each step flow to the next? Whatever scope is, it should fit in framework of original proposal. Anita has done a good extraction from original grant – reminding everyone what that grant said we would do and how we would approach. We set out some methodology in the grant proposal but Jamie feels it was done well with a broad description that will allow flexibility.

Potential goals –

Provide transportation to all public lands with seamless service.

Expanding existing service and building on the “knowns” in reaching underserved populations.

Complete a plan with priority action items for next steps. Next step could include seeking funds to prove a demonstration project identified in this plan.

Green benefits as a secondary benefit vs. goal was discussed. Phil felt reducing carbon would only be accomplished if you were getting folks to give up their cars in exchange for ATS but focus of project is getting those to public lands who aren't currently using cars. However, an important TRIP criteria includes environmental benefits.

Discussion about using VOLPE –

Team is wondering at what point we would consider using VOLPE's services. They are a service for hire and we need a clear scope of work developed so may not be appropriate at this time. They do planning; it's one of Eric's strengths. Jamie is meeting with them in October and can

discuss what they feel they can best bring to our project. We need to work their potential costs into our budget.

/s/ Timory